**Role-Playing Games!**

Poop!

* Origin of RPG’s
  + D&D
* RPG HIstory: Wargames
  + Chaturanga
  + Chess
  + Begins with the idea of a character
  + Kriegspiel
    - Early versions had 3 chessboards
      * You had a fog of war
      * And a kind of DM who could see all the boards
  + HG Wells, Little Wars
  + Diplomacy
  + Tactics
    - Seen as first modern wargame
    - Characters has different movements and abilities
  + RAND Corporation
    - People thinking about games
* Early RPG Game Culture
  + Late 1960’s gamers had trouble finding each other
  + How did people find each other in these sub-cultures?
  + Game conferences, game shops, etc.
  + GenCon (Geneva Convention)
    - Low budget geeky affair
  + Playing at the World by John Peterson, a great book on RPG’s
* Dave Arneson and Gary Gygax
  + Create D&D
* Siege of Brodenburg
  + Directly influenced D&D
  + Mini units representing individual people
  + Siege of a castle
  + A zoomed in field of battle
* The Braunstein Game
  + Directly influenced D&D
  + Individual characters in a small town
* Chainmail
  + Another direct influence,
  + 1971 with Gary Gygax
  + Had stats for different weapons
  + In the core rules you got man to man rules
    - Some of the most influential rules every written
* Black Moor
  + Arneson made it
* All these create D&D.
  + A 3 volume set, extremely elaborate
* **Key Game: D&D**
  + 1974, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, Tabletop, USA
  + Most influential game on modern games
    - Players playing a character
    - HP, armor, class, level
    - Exploring, fighting, looting, leveling up
    - Level design as part of the game
    - Game rules as simulation
    - Rolling dice to resolve situations
    - Game as a multi-session campaign
    - Fantasy narrative in games
    - Players creating game content
    - Game expansions and licensing
  + How does D&D work?
    - It’s a game with an incredible amount of flexibility
    - Improvisation and open ended storytelling set against the complicated numerical dice system.
    - The game isn’t just the complete whim of the DM, but is following rules
  + As your armor class gets lower, the better your armor (-10) is awesome, and (10) is no armor.
  + What makes all that possible?
    - Gerhard von Scharnhost
      * Experiments done on the statistics for different artillery
      * The creation of systems of simulation
  + Systems of Simulation
    - Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, Charisma
    - “These rules may be treated as guidelines around which you form a game that suits you”
  + What stories did people choose to tell?
  + Well, these players grew out of a culture of readers
    - Tolkien and LotR hugely influential
    - Approached storytelling as game design
    - Influence is not hard to see in the character design of D&D
      * Dwarves, elves, etc.
  + Gary Gygax went out of his way to distance himself from Tolkien
  + D&D as Storytelling
    - World has a history
    - Game lasts many sessions
    - Rich fantasy world
    - Players take on a persona
  + Mazes and Monsters
    - Tom Hanks
    - The dangers of RPG’s
    - D&D was seen as something that corrupted youth introducing them to demons and devis
  + The reality of playing D&D
  + Character
    - Shared Fantasy by Gary Alan Fine
      * The folklore of RPG’s
    - Person/Player/Character
      * Inhabiting these all at once
      * Player Types
        + Power gamer
        + Butt-kicker
        + Tactician
        + Specialist
        + Method actor
        + Storyteller
        + Casual gamer
      * One game can have SO many different approaches just in terms of HOW to play
        + Stems from the clash and union of storytelling and the system
  + D&D’s Legacy
    - 1976, Arneson left D&D and made AD&D
    - Acquired by Wizards of the Coast, then Hasbro
    - A whole industry spawned, new games, new worlds, new systems
    - Society for Creative Anachronism, 1966
    - Historical Reenactments
    - Vampire: The Masquerade, 1991,
    - Nordic LARPs, 2000’s
    - Sleep No More (2011), interactive theater
    - Cosplay
    - Modern indie boardgames
    - Magic the Gathering, 1993
    - Arkham Horror, 1987
    - Colossal Cave, computer D&D
* **Key Game: Wizardry: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord**
  + 1981, Sir-Tech Software, PC, USA
  + WHY
  + Established the computer “dungeon crawl” RPG
  + Classical elements
    - Parties
    - Wandering through 3D space
    - Brenda Romero’s first game job
    - Influenced Japanese RPG’s
  + Dungeon crawling was what you did to pass the time in D&D
  + In Wizardry it IS the game
  + Dungeon Loop
    - Adventure
      * Kill monsters for exp. points
      * Lose HP
      * Collect loot
        + Level up

Become more powerful

Deeper into the dungeon

Recuperate

Heal

Sell loot by stuff

* + Problem solving was a huge strategy
    - What classes do you want to take in this dungeon?
    - Different strengths and weaknesses and alignments
    - The party you choose becomes a way to maximize efficiency
    - Dungeon throws different things at you to test your party
    - Everything is shuffling and reshuffling each game
      * Discovering different parts of the system
    - Narrative was still there
      * But it was like the graphics on PacMan cabinet
      * Secondary
* Ultima (series)
  + 1981-1999, Richard Garriot, Origin systems, PC, USA
  + Influential designer
  + Ethics based character system
  + Multi-title series
  + Rich gameplay and deep worlds
  + Classes CRPG
  + Designer Garriot
    - Child of astronauts
    - One of the first people known as game creator
    - His persona extended to “Lord British” in the games
  + Classic dungeon crawler
    - Travel overland
    - Explore towns
    - Find dungeons
    - When you encounter a monster on a map you zoom in on another map
    - Large games
  + Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar
    - Explored ethics in character creation
  + Ultima V
    - Virtue system
    - Kind of goody two shoes
    - You want to be the best you can be
    - Influenced later games like KOTOR and Fable
  + All leads back to D&D
    - Simulating Good and Evil
  + Ultima
    - Ultima games had improved graphics
    - Ultima underworld was a POV 3D game
    - Ultima Online, not the first MMORPG, but a good template
    - Encapsulates the entire history of RPG history
* Final Fantasy (series)
  + 1987-Present
  + Hironobu Sakaguchi, Squaresoft, NES, Japan
  + Prototypical JRPG
    - Casual approach to RPG’s
    - Deep and customizable
    - Pop culture sensibilities
    - Grinding as core mechanic
    - Attempt to bring emotional storytelling to games
    - Took japanese games to global audience
  + Dragon Quest, 1986
    - Ground Zero for JRPG’s
    - Influenced first Final Fantasy
    - Overland exploration with semi-random encounters
    - Inspiration for Dragon Quest saw Wizardry and wanted to make it simpler and more emotionally involving
    - Dragon Quest and JRPG’s are influential for the way they weaved their way into pop culture
    - Manga, anime, etc.
  + FFII, 1988
  + FFX, 2001
  + FFVII, 1997
  + Generally there’s a world in crisis, and you and your band of friends are out to save it
    - These characters grow
  + Many different materials and items
  + The degree of character customization is HUGE in these games
  + Grinding
    - You fight and encounter, fight and encounter, fighting again an again and again, etc
    - This is an aspect of all RPG’s
    - Yuji Horii (designer of Dragon Quest)
      * “At the end you will rewarded for your good work”
  + A very different legacy came out of the Dragon Quest series
    - You could recruit monsters
* Pokemon
  + 1996-Present
  + Game Freak, Satoshi Tajiri, Gameboy, Japan
  + Canonical creature collecting gameboy
    - Adventure game & modular battles
    - Encyclopedic system of creatures
    - Game-centric trans-media property
    - Solidly in the pantheon of popculture
  + Pokemon are at the heart of the game
  + Designer was an insect collector as a kid
  + Trans-media property
    - Spans many mediums
  + Ash and the Player are doing the same thing
  + Pokemon’s narrative and games use the same verbs
  + At the heart of pokemon are the pokemon and the ever growing list of them
    - Depth comes from interlocking rules and relationships
  + Pokemon is the future of interactive storytelling
  + Pokemon Go points something out about the world
    - For 100 years, visual arts has been more about representation more than documenting the world
    - The premise of VR and AAA games is immersion into 3D worlds.
    - This is a pre-modern ideal.
    - We need to GO FORWARD
    - AR is doing the better thing
* NetHack
  + 1987, Mike Stephenson, PC, USA
  + Massively emergent dungeon crawl
  + Deep and complex graphics
  + Testament to open source development
  + Constant unexpected situations
  + Most important roguelike
    - Procedurally generated spaces
    - Turn based
    - Permadeath
    - Combinatorial complexity
  + Procedurality
    - Sol LeWitt
      * An artist, did Wall Drawing
      * The work of art are the rules, not the outcome.
      * Artist offered the rules, not the outcome.
    - The procedures or algorithms that make for unpredictable games and outcomes
    - Familiars
      * A pet follows you
    - Makes the game feel infinite
    - To defeat the eel
      * Grease your armor
      * Stop levitating
      * Amulet of life-saving
      * Teleport eel
    - The space you explore in NetHack are randomized dungeons with interconnecting set peices and stores.
    - Mine Town appears between levels 5 and 8
  + Wizardry vs. NetHack
    - Procedurality versus describing everything in advance
    - Visual language goes away in NetHack, it’s all representational
* Fallout
  + 1997, Tim Cain/Interplay, PC.USA
  + Smart and elegant CRPG (computer RPG)
  + Dark and ironic sense of style
  + Political message in its post-apocalyptic settings
  + Room for player expression
  + Attempts to balance procedurality and scripted/linear game design
  + SPECIAL Character System
    - Attributes
    - Skills
    - Traits
    - Perks
  + This isometric game was closer to D&D mini’s
  + Fallout tries to find a balance between system and narrative
  + Dialogue with NPC’s
  + Fallout 3
    - Updated the underlying game systems
* JRPG
  + Console
  + More linear
  + Non-spatial turn based combar
  + Pre-authored story
  + Gameplay THEN cutscene
  + Brighter poppier cartoonier
* CRPG
  + PC
  + More open ended
  + Tactical, positional, turn based
  + Story affected by player choice
  + Gameplay woven into dialogue and story
  + Grimmer, heavier, more “hardcore”
* Diablo
  + 1996, Blizzard North, PC, USA
  + Character customization and evolution
  + Emphasis on real time combat action
  + Strips away story elements
  + Leveraged online community
  + Iconic action-rpg
  + Swarms of enemies, lots of clicking in real time conflict
  + There’s a theme, and an underlying surface, but no real world or story
  + Emphasis on detailed character building
    - Optimal character points, weapons, and skills
  + Perfect builds for different player types
  + Blizzard when developing these games used player communities really well
  + Leads into things like League of Legends
  + MMORPG’s
  + Branch of the RPG family that brings world back
    - Lots of players
    - Persistent state of the world
      * MUDs
        + Multi-user dungeons
        + Multiplayer text adventures
    - Everquest
      * GPS of Everquest was 77th in the word
* World of Warcraft
  + 2004, Blizzard Entertainment, PC, USA
  + Gold standard for MMORPG
  + Stylized by lush art direction
  + Lots of attention to beginning
  + Many community features
  + Elder hame for advanced played
  + Complex economy
  + Gentle learning curve
  + Look for the exclamation marks
  + A lot of combat
    - Combines real time with turn based in spirit (working as a team with timed attacks)